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UNCLAS MAPUTO 000378

SIPDIS

G/TIP FOR RYOUSEY, AF/RSA FOR RZUEHLKE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PHUM KWMN SMIG MZ

SUBJECT: MOZAMBIQUE: GATHERING SUPPORT FOR AN  
ANTI-TRAFFICKING LAW

REF: MAPUTO 305

11. (U) Summary: Mozambique's new government is increasingly serious about addressing the issue of trafficking in women and children. At a trafficking in persons luncheon held at the Ambassador's residence on March 16, representatives of key government agencies and local non-governmental organizations assessed the level of the trafficking problem, described recent steps that the GRM has taken and discussed strategies to establish an anti-trafficking law, though they cautioned that the process could take time. End Summary.

12. (U) The Ambassador hosted an anti-trafficking in persons luncheon at her residence on March 16, attended by representatives from the staff of the Council of Ministers, the Ministry of Interior, and the Ministry of Women and Social Action, along with representatives of key non-governmental organizations dedicated to women's rights and legal issues. These ministries and organizations were involved in passing Mozambique's 2004 Family Law, and would be the lead actors in the drive to create new anti-trafficking legislation.

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Prospects for Legislation  
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13. (U) All at the luncheon were eager to take on the project of adopting an anti-trafficking law. Post has learned separately from the Ministry of Justice's legal reform unit (which drafts most legislative initiatives at the request of the Council of Ministers) that drafting an anti-TIP law is the sixth highest priority for 2005. The attendees cautioned, however, that progress would take time; building support for new social legislation typically requires an extensive public consultation process. Further, they all doubted that the number of trafficked persons reached the 1,000 per year estimate used by the International Organization on Migration (IOM). The Ministry of Interior representative said her ministry, which keeps statistics on crimes against women and children, has heard of only a handful of anecdotal reports of trafficking from Mozambique to South Africa. As a result, she said, raising the public profile of the trafficking problem in order to pass a law would require some time.

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Recent Initiatives  
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14. (U) Representatives from various agencies outlined specific TIP-related steps that their agencies have taken recently. NGO representatives noted that on March 15 the public Eduardo Mondlane University signed an agreement to carry out a UN-funded study on trafficking in persons; this would be the first TIP study carried out by a government-affiliated entity. Others noted that in January 2005 the GRM had given approval for IOM, after years of delay, to re-open its office in Mozambique. The representative from the Council of Ministers staff said that the Council plans to ratify the UN Convention on Transnational Organized Crime within the next two months; this convention was originally signed by Mozambique in 2002.

15. (U) Comment: Embassy will continue to press the government to adopt specific anti-trafficking legislation and to ratify the UN Convention as planned.

LALIME